



2012



2012 ELECTION CYCLE – BEGINS NOW

Be an active voter. Start thinking about your participation in the U.S. 2012 elections today!

The Consular Section staff at U.S. Embassy Skopje is ready to assist with completing your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) -- the form you need to complete **this year** to participate in the 2012 elections as an overseas absentee voter. Our purpose is to inform and educate you about your voting rights, to ensure you are able to exercise your right to participate in elections for federal offices (President, Vice President, Senator, and Representative), and to assist you with voting in state or local elections, if allowed by your state.

New absentee voting laws are in effect for the 2012 elections. You will no longer automatically receive ballots based on a previous absentee ballot request. All U.S. citizens outside the United States who want to vote by absentee ballot in the 2012 primary and general elections must complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) every year if they wish to vote from abroad. States are now required to send out ballots 45 days before an election. No matter what state you vote in, you can now ask your local election officials to provide your blank ballots to you electronically (by email, internet download, or fax, depending on your state). You can now also confirm your registration and ballot delivery on-line. Be sure to include your email address on the form to take advantage of the electronic ballot delivery option. This is the fastest and most reliable way to receive your ballot on time, and we strongly recommend every overseas voter take advantage of it. Learn more at the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) website www.FVAP.gov.

You can obtain a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) at [FVAP's website-http://www.fvap.gov/FPCA/fpcachoice.html](http://www.fvap.gov/FPCA/fpcachoice.html). The FPCA is accepted by all local election officials in all U.S. states and territories. It allows you to register to vote and request absentee ballots for all elections for federal offices (presidential and state primaries, run-off, special, and the November general elections) during the course of the year. An online wizard will help you complete the form. Depending on your state's voting requirements, you then either send in the FPCA electronically or mail it to your local election officials. To mail it, print out the completed FPCA and the (U.S.) postage-paid envelope containing the address of your local election officials. If you mail or bring in your forms or ballots to us we will mail them back home for you without you having to pay for international mail. The transit time is approximately 10 days. If it's easier for you to use Macedonia's postal system, be sure to affix sufficient postage and allow sufficient time for international mail delivery.

Even if your state does not have a presidential primary in the early months of 2012, it is important that you submit a new Federal Post Card Application this and every January to receive all absentee ballots for which you are eligible. By applying early, you also allow enough time for election officials to contact you and resolve any questions or problems with your registration/ballot request.

Remember that your vote counts, and that many U.S. elections within the past ten years have been decided by a margin of victory of less than 0.1%. All states are required to count every absentee ballot as long as it's valid and reaches local election officials by the absentee ballot receipt deadline.

Be an Educated Voter. Check out the FVAP links page for helpful resources that will aid your research of candidates and issues. Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues are widely available and easy to obtain via numerous websites such as [Project Smart Voter \(http://www.votesmart.org\)](http://www.votesmart.org). You can also read national and hometown newspapers on-line, or search the Internet to locate articles and information.

For information about election dates and deadlines, subscribe to FVAP's Voting Alerts (vote@fvap.gov). FVAP also shares Voting Alerts via [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/DoDFVAP) (<http://www.facebook.com/DoDFVAP>) and [Twitter](http://twitter.com/FVAP) (<http://twitter.com/FVAP>).

If you have any questions about registering to vote overseas, please contact Skopje's Voting Assistance Officer at tel: (02) 310-2000, or at VoteSkopje@state.gov.

Can I Vote Absentee?

In order to vote in U.S. elections, you must be:

- A citizen of the United States on the date of the election in which you wish to vote; and
- At least 18 years old on Election Day. (Some States allow 17-year-olds to vote in primary elections if they will be 18 on or before the general election.)

The absentee voting process applies to you if you are:

- An active duty member of the U.S. Uniformed Services or
- Merchant Marine;
- A family member (spouse or dependent);
- A U.S. citizen residing outside the US.

How Do I Vote Absentee?

First Step:

You must register and request an absentee ballot in your State of legal residence by completing a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) according to your State or territory's specific instructions and submitting it to your local election office.

Second Step:

Your local election official will process your FPCA to determine if you meet the jurisdiction's residency requirements and will decide which ballot to send you.

Third Step:

Vote and return your State ballot as soon as you receive it. If you have registered and requested your ballot by your State's request deadline (or at least 30 days before the election, whichever is later), you may use the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) any time before the election.

Can I Email or Fax My Voting Materials?

All States allow you to receive the blank absentee ballot by email, fax, or other electronic means.

Where allowed by State law, you may email or fax the FPCA to your local election official.

Upon completing and signing the FPCA and the Electronic Transmission Sheet (which can be found online at www.fvap.gov), you can:

Email: Scan the FPCA and save as a PDF file. Email the file as an attachment, along with a scanned copy of the Electronic Transmission Sheet. Email directly to the local election office. Email addresses can be found on the State's election website.

Fax: Fax all pages of the voted ballot. Use a separate transmittal sheet for each ballot and send each ballot separately to ensure that each ballot is received by the proper election official. It is recommended that you fax the ballot directly to your local election office. Fax numbers can be found on the State's election website. After emailing or faxing, your State may require that you also mail the completed ballot to your local election office.

Recommended Mailing Dates for the November 2012 General Election

Send your FPCA by August 15, 2012, to ensure that you receive your ballot in time to vote and return it to be counted.